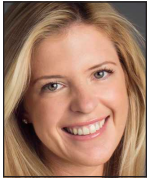


# A few tips for trying times

**Dear Annie:** Our family is going through the end-of-life challenges of my husband's final illness. We have always been close, and our children, who live nearby, have really stepped up to assist him — and me — in these final months of home hospice care. In all the important ways, we are supporting one another emotionally and otherwise. But there are a few rough edges, and I thought a list composed by someone going through this might help another family with this ordeal.

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

To the children visiting: Mom is no longer the cook, maid or hotelier. That was fine and freely given for holidays, but this is no holiday. If you come for a visit, make up your own bed, and change and launder your sheets and linens before you leave. And how about offering to throw in some of the towels and sheets for your father, folding them and helping to change our bed?

If I cook, you're in charge of the cleanup — and reach out to be sure the garbage is emptied, paper towels are in the holder, the refrigerator is occasionally cleaned and

the bathrooms you use are left clean. Offer to shop for groceries, run errands, walk the dog and take us out if your father is up to it. And consider cooking a meal for us. Check the car. Is the tire pressure good? Is it gassed up?

Look around you proactively; if something needs fixing, offer to take care of it. Ask whether I need coverage so that I can make my own appointments. I lose sight of these things with the demands of feeding, bathing and dressing your father. The weekly hospice support is limited and focuses mostly on nursing care.

To my beloved grandchildren: Just be yourselves. No need to tiptoe around. Your grandfather likes the clamor of your play and to hear your stories. Just try to keep the peace among you. Help your parents clean up your toys. Tell your memories and stories of your grandpa to us, and help us make new memories.

My beloved kids and grandchildren have been wonderful in all the important ways — spending loving quality time with us and sharing activities and memories.

But like all people, they fall back into the habits of visiting children, and I hope these suggestions will be of help to others. — *Sad Nana With So Much to Be Thankful For*

**Dear Sad:** This is a beautiful letter. I hope you've already shared all of these requests with your children. If not, please do. I'm sure that helping you would bring them some solace in this trying time.

**Dear Annie:** I enjoyed reading about "Fussy Larry," the man who is constantly complaining about the free food his friends cook for him. I have a loved one who, like Fussy Larry, can sometimes be ungraciously and needlessly critical of things I make. When that happens, I give him a big happy smile and say, "Then I have wonderful news: Nobody is going to make you eat it!" It doesn't change his behavior, but it ramps down my irritation considerably. — *Maggie*

**Dear Maggie:** I totally agree with that tactic. In familiar situations such as this one, a humorously blunt response is sometimes the best mirror to hold up to a person so he might reflect on his rude behavior. Plus, as you mentioned, it can help deflect your feelings of annoyance, and that alone is a win in my book.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You feel like you're in your own little world, but know that others are very aware of you now. "If you reveal your secrets to the wind, you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees." — Kahlil Gibran

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There's so much you have access to, and you're a curious person, ready to learn all you can and experience the richness of life. Self-regulation is, therefore, among your biggest challenges.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You're more concerned with achievement than reward. In fact, the reward, as far as you're concerned, is the achievement. The accolades can be nice, but they can also be embarrassing and cause more pressure than they are worth.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** New research suggests that you might do yourself some good by talking to yourself, especially if you're saying encouraging or compassionate things, and most especially if you're saying them out loud.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Take on the small, easily won challenges. Building up a track record of success will give you the confidence you need to go for the more remarkable and difficult opportunities coming your way in the near future.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Belonging isn't about fitting together perfectly, having a lot in common or agreeing on most things. Belonging is about acceptance. Be inclusive. Set a tone of friendliness and compassion. Foster a sense of unconditional belonging.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** The nearness of interesting and well-traveled people or the pull of exotic lands will activate your adventurous spirit. If you make discovery a priority you'll definitely find the necessary resources.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Everyone will bring something to the table, though not necessarily a tangible thing. Some will bring an idea, a talent for receptivity, a custom, a grateful heart and much expressed pleasure in the opportunity at hand.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** For you, adrenaline isn't a hormone that kicks in on an emergency-only basis; rather, it's a daily boost. Your high-energy style will be well suited for the challenges of the day.

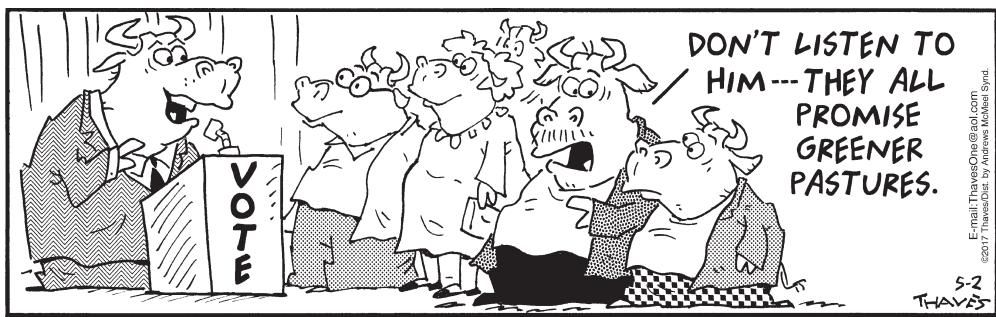
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You're happy when the people you love are happy. There is one person in particular whose happiness means the most to you, and you're likely to spend a lot of time, money and energy on making this person smile.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Sometimes it is more gracious to have a little of what's being offered to you than to abstain. The gestures and rituals around togetherness will have greater meaning today.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** As artistic and imaginative as you are, you still admire those who lack pretension, are too laid back to strive and too chill to social-climb. Your values are right in line with all that it takes to create meaningful, lasting friendships.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 3).** Since a person's knowledge only goes as far as his or her experiences, and because your sincere desire is for a wealth of knowledge, you'll open yourself to discovery, dive into mysteries and let curiosity carry you to different parts of the world. The funds come in June and November. August begins a serious bond. Libra and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 4, 47 and 13.

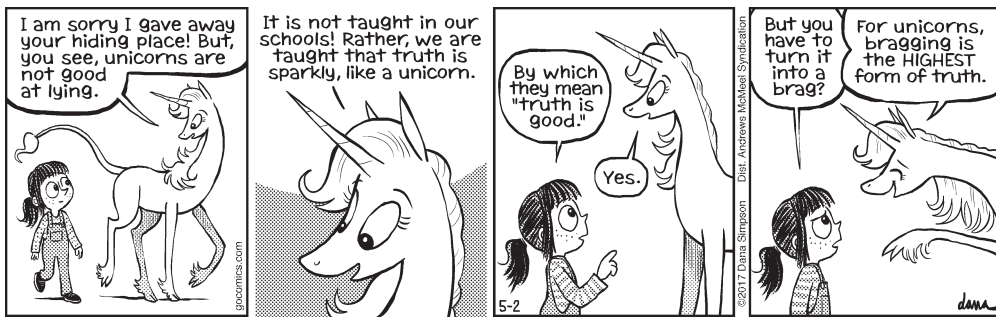
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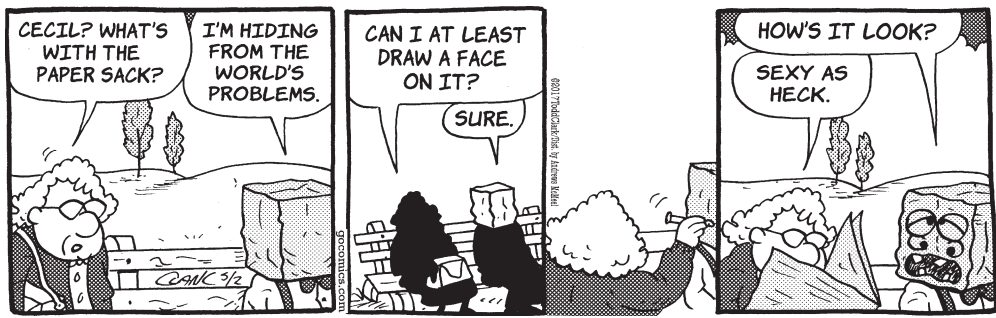
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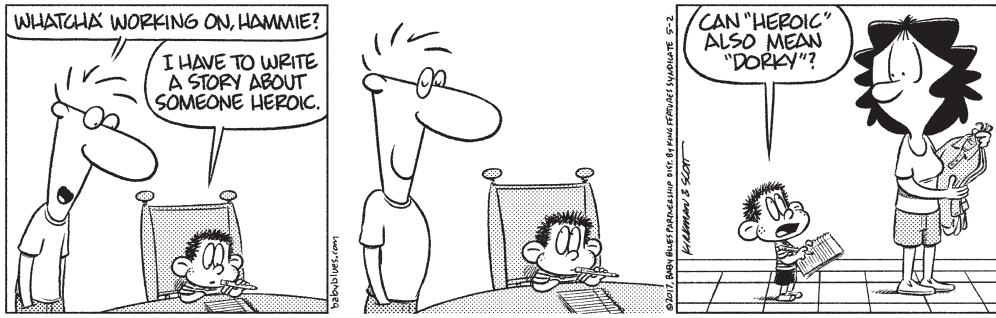
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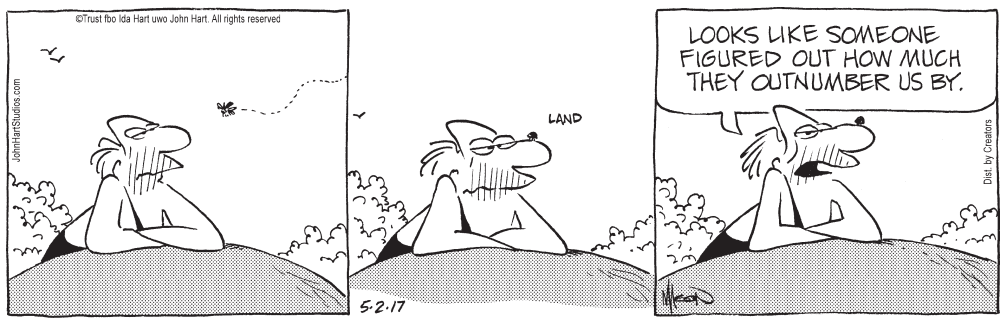
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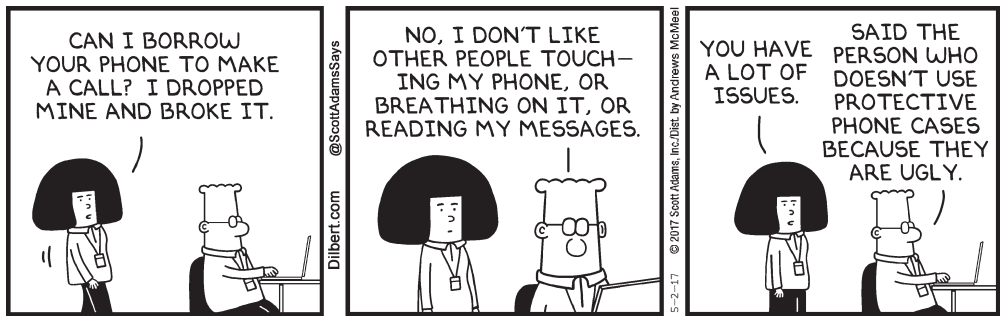
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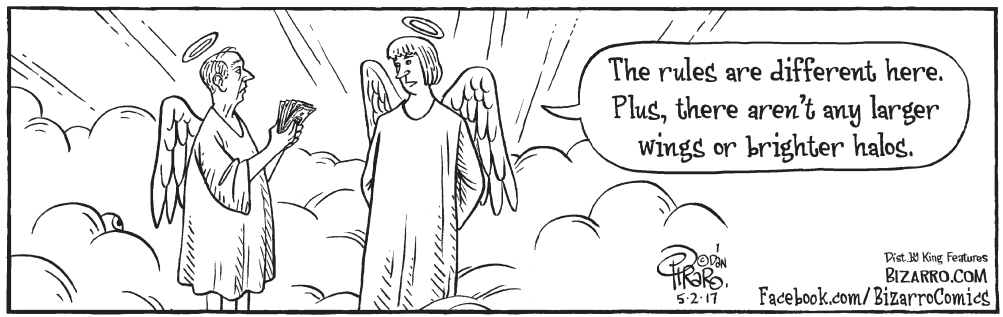
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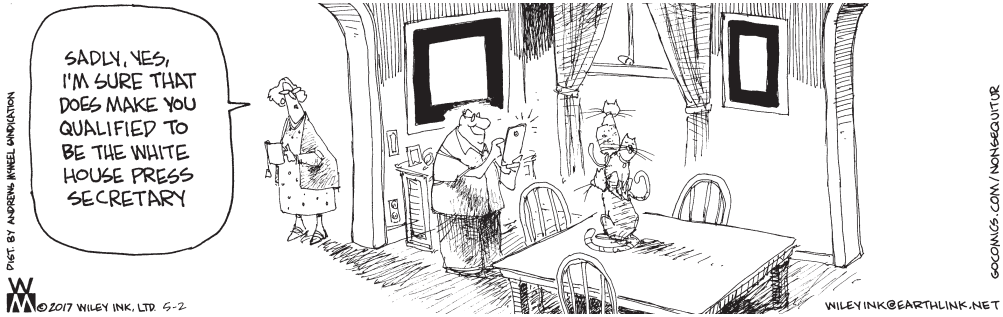
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